softly slowly by stregadellaluna

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Danny wakes up on a lazy Sunday morning to find that Vlad has a surprise waiting for him.

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Author's Note:

> wrote this six years ago, deleted it, and am now posting on a new account lmao

Danny was sleeping peacefully, soft sunlight streaming through the open bay windows and gently filtering over him and the white sheets of his luxurious, shared bed. He was tired deep in his bones lately, a sure sign of getting older and aging (even if it had taken years and years and years to do so) but it was a nice kind of tired, a satisfied type of tired. So he slept. Deeply and without a worry in the world. Danny had long since found his slice of happiness and he reveled in its safety.

Sleeping in used to be a very rare luxury. Something he hadn't afforded himself in his early teen years, he'd had too many responsibilities and too many nights filled with fighting. And then he matured, maybe not in body at first (not with his halfa status slowing his growth significantly) but in the very least in mind.

Years passed and he made truces and deals and treaties. Years passed and he learned to sleep and eat and care. Years passed and he learned and he yearned and he finally grew.

Years and years flew by and, eventually, wonderfully, he fell into a warm and comfortable type of love. Enemies at first, then reluctant acquaintances, then friends, and then so peacefully in love it still took his breath away. It seemed like the natural course, though many might disagree. He still only looked 25 after all, but the many that disagreed didn't know that he'd been 25 for a very, very long time. He'd long since stopped caring about them. Not when he was loved in such a perfect, familiar way.

So he slept. He let the sunshine wash over his body and caress his dreams in a warm embrace, he let his breath continue its slow, unhurried pace, and he let his limbs relax and drift away.

He dreamt of bright smiles, soft fires, and long silver hair. He dreamt

of a warm body, secure arms, and the gentle purring of cats. He dreamt of beautiful laughter, grand open windows, and the first soothing bars of his favorite piano song.

He woke slowly and with a great long stretch after that, moaning in bliss and relief. He loved the days he could sleep in, loved the slow Sunday mornings that let him wake up on his own terms.

With a yawn and one final stretch he let his eyes blink open and he felt ready to face the day. He felt especially ready to sit back and do nothing with his favorite person. The ritual of their Sundays.

Then his gaze landed on the note written in fancy, nearly indiscernible, handwriting, sitting on the antique nightstand on his side of the bed. He picked it up and smiled.

"*Dear Daniel,*

I know how much you enjoy your mornings in, so I will let you sleep. You look too cozy to disturb. Breakfast, as always, will be saved in the fridge for when you wake. I only write to ask that, once you've eaten, to please find me in the third floor study. I've been setting up a surprise for you.

With Love,

Vlad "

His smile widened and he kicked off the rest of the sheets still tangled around his legs, all the while clutching the note and rereading it with a childlike excitement. Vlad's surprises always made him giddy. Like their first date all over again.

He rushed through his morning routine; shower, shave, etc etc. He nearly took the steps two at a time to get down to the kitchen before giving up entirely and flying the rest of the way. He slowed down to eat, but only because Vlad would be angry with him if he found out he'd skipped a meal. And Vlad always found out. He could never be bitter about it though, because he did the same thing when Vlad tried to work through the night without rest.

Their relationship was mutual like that; Vlad took care of Danny and Danny took care of Vlad. Vlad may have had a few years of

experience over him but they were still equals in everything. Keeping peace among ghosts, managing everything in the house, and taking care of each other. Whether it be with stern glares, whispered praise, or gentle kisses. They cared. And loved. Didn't matter that Danny could be stubborn to a fault or that Vlad could take grudges too far. They had their fights and had their tempers, but they'd long since learned to love each other's faults as well as virtues.

Danny chewed thoughtfully on his perfectly crisp bacon as he looked around the kitchen with that same sense of contentment that always seemed to wash over him when he stopped to think about his life. It still seemed so fresh sometimes, so new and dazzling- but without the nervous uncertainty that had plagued him the first few weeks. Afraid that it would all unravel and fall apart like a too-good dream. But he knew it wouldn't now. Years and years and years made everything feel solid, sturdy, secure. Even when things felt fresh and new again, he could feel the foundation holding everything together underneath. He was safe here, with this love and this life. Vlad couldn't leave him like everyone else already had, drifting apart and growing old. The world may spin faster and faster around them, but here- this house- would stay suspended in time for as long as they needed. Danny hoped so, at least.

The sunlight that had woken him in the bedroom poured into the kitchen, glancing off smooth tile, dark wood, and shiny metal. Danny watched the dust motes dance in the air and his eyes softened for no discernible reason. Everything was soft about him nowadays, but he didn’t mind.

Memories drifted through his mind like the dust motes through the sun, idyllic and graceful. Deep laughter, clouds of flour, small fires (that still weren’t his fault, thank you), arguments with tears, and warm embraces after a comfort-food dinner. He finished off his french toast with a grin.

Danny put his dishes in the sink with a delighted hum and danced around the kitchen, his excitement back as he remembered the surprise that awaited him. He felt giddy and he was sure his eyes were shining with held-back glee.

The third floor felt like an eternity away and all he wanted was to

rush up and away and shower Vlad's thoughtful face with kisses. But he refrained. He knew Vlad loved to keep his surprises until the best possible moment, his need for dramatic flair shining through. The man loved to be as ostentatious as possible. Though Danny had to hand it to him, when it worked it worked well. Vlad had pulled off some pretty impressive displays, now that no one (Danny) was trying to stop his evil plans from coming to fruition.

So Danny didn't rush. He didn't fly directly to the study and phase directly into the room like he really, really wanted to. He took the stairs instead, each quick footstep adding to the anticipation and making his heart pound and his stomach knot.

Since when was their house so large? Yes, they lived in a mansion (because Vlad's opulent ass wouldn't settle for less) but this was starting to seem ridiculous. Why did they even have three floors?! Two was a perfectly reasonable number of levels. Honestly, no one even *used* the third floor, let alone the study. It'd been empty the last time he'd seen it, decades ago now.

Danny was itching to take flight and just rush the rest of the way. He was far too wound up with anticipation. But he kept walking. And complaining about how big their house was, refusing to think about what possible surprise Vlad could have come up with.

He held his breath when he stopped in front of the third floor study door, just staring at the thick wood and stopping himself from rocking on his toes. He taped down his grin as much as he could before he knocked.

Vlad opened the door only a small crack, bright smile shinning through the small sliver he allowed. Danny tried to look around him but the room was far too dark to see much, which made him very, very suspicious.

"Daniel," Vlad said. "Good morning, dear."

"Morning, sweet pea," Danny chirped back with a cocky grin, knowing Vlad still had mixed feeling about cheesy pet names.

Vlad scowled at him a bit, but Danny's grin only widened when he

spotted the soft, barely-there blush on his cheeks. Success.

Vlad narrowed his eyes but soon returned to smiling. His eyes shone a brilliant cobalt, like moonlight illuminating the deep blue of the ocean. There was excitement there, but also a nervous edge that Danny didn't often see. Was Vlad worried that Danny wouldn't like the surprise? He always liked Vlad's surprises, especially because the man always worked so hard on them- his analytical mind and penchant for scheming directed toward an outward display of honest care and love that he could very rarely voice. It didn't matter what the surprise itself was, it was always the dedication and thoughtfulness that swept Danny off his feet.

"Almost done," he whispered. Like the surprise might startle if he spoke too loud, then closed the door. Leaving Danny to wait and bite his lip to shreds in order to prevent himself from phasing through the door right then and there.

He was startled when a few moments later, Vlad himself phased through the door, keeping it closed. He moved to stand behind Danny, his arms wrapping around the other's waist and his chin lowered to rest on Danny's shoulder.

"Are you ready, honey bunches?" Vlad murmured in his ear and Danny shook with laughter. Fighting fire with fire was a new tactic for Vlad but the teasing tone of his voice just made it endearing and hilarious.

"As I'll ever be, cutie pie," he shot back, his hand already excitedly shooting for the door knob and turning it with glee.

The door creaked open and he gasped.

Dark curtains blocked out most of the sunlight, only small honeyed stripes spilled out from underneath to bathe the wooden floor in pale swathes of a yellow glow. It was a dazzling effect when paired with the surprise twinkling up above. The shadows the curtains had provided were chased away by the gentle glow of hundreds and hundreds of tiny little lights all rigged up to span the entire ceiling and Danny realized-

They were stars. They were supposed to be stars. Each little light was so carefully arranged to reflect the actual constellations of the night sky.

"Vlad..." he whispered, awe coloring his tone. He was so, so close to crying.

Vlad chuckled. "There's more, dear," he said, gently pushing Danny further into the room and closing the door behind them. It made the lights shine all the more with the added darkness.

Danny was still too busy looking up and counting the stars, spotting more constellations and trying to hold back tears.

Vlad took his hand and led him to a spot more thoroughly wrapped in shadow, hiding the only apparent furniture in the room. Danny hadn't even noticed it was bare until he saw that the only thing there was a plush green rug and a scattered amount of stone gray pillows. It looked like grass and rocks and now that he was closer he could see the walls were painted the deep blue of a night sky. He was sure Vlad didn't do it on purpose but it was nearly the same shade as Vlad's eyes.

"Do you like it?" Vlad asked in the quiet of the room.

"I love it," Danny breathed back, his gaze moving back to the lights. His stars. The stars that Vlad had given him. He didn't notice when Vlad moved to kneel down in front of him.

"Daniel," Vlad whispered, his fingers rubbing nervous circles on Danny's hand.

Danny looked back to him and his eyes widened, his breath catching in his chest and his heart doing somersaults behind his ribcage. The artificial starlight lit up Vlad's smiling, anxious face with a soft glow as he knelt on one knee in front of him. One of his hands still clutched to Danny's but the other was now holding a small velvet box.

He waited for Vlad to go on, his free hand moving up to cover his mouth in some vain attempt not to cry. This wasn't a surprise so

much as an inevitability, but he hadn’t expected it now, hadn’t expected it all to feel so perfect, so right.

Vlad flipped open box and the simple golden ring inside caught the light of the stars and Danny already felt tears leaking over his hand. It was perfect- not too flashy, not too plain, beautiful designs carved into the sides and likely an engraving on the inside if he knew anything about Vlad. The room was perfect, the ring was perfect, Vlad was perfect.

Danny fell to his knees beside Vlad and tackled him into a speechless, tear-stained hug.

They both laughed and rolled on the soft green carpet, the ring held up behind Danny's back as Vlad tried so valiantly to keep hold of it. The laughter settled and they held each other's gaze, steady and happy beyond words. The look in Vlad's eyes was the softest Danny had ever seen and he was sure his were the same. He felt like he could melt right there, and if he didn't have a strong hold of his powers he might have.

Vlad carded a hand through Danny's hair and rolled them on their sides so he could hold up the ring box once again.

“Will you marry me, Daniel?” he whispered so earnestly that Danny felt like his life would be complete forever from that moment on.

“Yes,” he whispered back, “Yes, yes, yes.”

Vlad smiled as he took the ring and slipped it on his trembling finger. Danny grinned back and tackled Vlad again, smothering him against the carpet. The ring on his finger shone along with the bright smile that stretched his face.

“I love you, sweet cheeks,” he said, moving to cup Vlad’s face between his hands and shower him with a thousand kisses.

Vlad laughed and held him gently, “I love you, too... sugar plum. Happy anniversary."